

FY 2018 African American Heritage Preservation Program Grant Awardees

Jane Gates Heritage House (Cumberland)

Jane Gates Heritage House, Inc.

This property derives its name from Jane Gates, a former slave, who was able to purchase the property in 1871. In the seven years between Maryland's Emancipation and 1871, Jane Gates, working as a laundress and nurse, amassed \$1,400 she used to purchase a home on Greene St. in Cumberland, Maryland. She lived here with her five children, including Edward Gates, the great-grandfather of Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr., a prominent scholar of African American culture at Harvard University. Dr. Gates showcased this property, 515 Greene Street, on his TV program "Finding your Roots" as a significant landmark for the Gates family.



Nearly 150 years later, the property is still in Gates family ownership. The Jane Gates Heritage House, Inc., the project's sponsor, is receiving a \$100,000 grant to perform large-scale exterior and interior rehabilitation work on the house. After being rehabilitated the Jane Gates Heritage House will become a touchstone for African American heritage in the Cumberland area. It will celebrate both historical connections to western Maryland's early development through the National Road, railroad, and canal, as well as new partnerships with institutions such as Allegany College of Maryland and Frostburg State University. (@JaneGatesHeritageHouse FaceBook)



St. Stephens AME Church (Easton)

St. Stephens African Methodist Episcopal Church

Located in the center of Unionville, St. Stephens African Methodist Episcopal Church is one of the oldest structures in the village, and the building has served this black community since 1892. 18 African American veterans of the Civil War returned to Talbot County after the war. Oral tradition of local residents relates that a black community known as Cowgilltown pre-dated the Civil War and was renamed Unionville when the African American veterans returned. The veterans purchased land in the area, some of which was eventually used to establish a schoolhouse and later St. Stephens Church. (<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/civil-war-african-american-veterans-town-own-unionville-180964398/>) Behind the church is a 19th and 20th century cemetery where all 18 of the veterans are buried.

St. Stephens African Methodist Episcopal Church is receiving a \$100,000 grant for exterior rehabilitation of the church and interpretation of the cemetery. A major component of work on the church will be the repair of the steeple, which was struck by lightning in 2015. The cemetery will be improved with landscaping and interpretive signage. The church and cemetery are part of the locally designated Civil War Trails, and will continue to be focal points for sharing Unionville's African American heritage with the public.

Pleasant View M.E. Church (Gaithersburg)

Pleasant View United Methodist Church

Today the Pleasant View Historic Site is a three-acre property comprised of the Pleasant View Methodist Episcopal Church, the Quince Orchard Colored School, and the Pleasant View Cemetery. The church was constructed in 1888 on a site purchased in trust by three African American residents of the Quince Orchard community in 1868. The church is representative of the post-Civil War era growth of the Methodist Church and the Washington Negro Conference in particular, and was extensively renovated in 1914 and in the 1950s. The school was built in 1875 as a school for white children; in 1901 the students outgrew the building and it was moved its current location to serve as school for black children, and over the years was expanded and modified. In 2015 Preservation Maryland selected Pleasant View as a Six-to-Fix site.



The project's sponsor, Pleasant View United Methodist Church, is receiving a \$100,000 grant for the first phase of exterior rehabilitation of the church building. This phase will include investigation to facilitate structural repairs in the future, repairs to the foundation, re-roofing, and drainage improvements. Future phases will also include rehabilitation of the school building and conservation of the cemetery. The long-term goal for the site is to serve as a community gathering place for workshops and educational activities, including teaching the history of the Quince Orchard community.



Community Civic League of Federalsburg / Laurel Grove Road School

Community of Civic League of Federalsburg, Inc.

The Rosenwald School on Laurel Grove Road in Federalsburg was constructed as a school for African American children in 1918, and functioned as a school until desegregation in 1964. Additions were constructed in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, and fires in 1968 and 1993 compromised the historic integrity of the structure. The building is still used today as a multipurpose community resource, and will celebrate its centennial in 2018.

The project's sponsor, the Community Civic League of Federalsburg, has been awarded a \$96,000 grant for the second phase of construction related to bringing the building up to code for continued use as a community center. This phase will include an HVAC upgrade, renovation of the kitchen and bathrooms, upgrades for ADA compliance, and parking improvements. In addition to advocating for the legacy of the school and providing public education related to the history of Caroline County's African American community, the center will provide educational opportunities for local African American students, community services, and community meeting space.

Asbury M.E. Church (Easton)

Historic Easton, Incorporated

Asbury M.E. Church is the oldest African American church structure in Easton, and the second oldest African American church structure in Talbot County. Asbury was organized in 1836 as both a white and black congregation. By the late 1840's there was a movement to separate black and white members and in 1844 there was a plat deeded for the colored church. The first house of worship was a wood frame structure used until the present brick structure was constructed in 1876. Asbury has served the community in various ways; as temporary high school classrooms for black students in the 1930's and now as a community center for the historically black enclave known as the "Hill" which is located within the Easton National Register District. Like nearby Bethel AME Church, built the following year, the church was dedicated by Frederick Douglass in 1878. Asbury is a Gothic revival brick church structure with a distinctive central bell tower with lattice belfry and a pyramidal roof with flaring eaves. The bell tower features a Henry McShane Bell produced in 1897.



Historic Easton, Incorporated, the project's sponsor, will use an African American Heritage Preservation grant – the project's fifth AAHPP grant -- in the amount of \$100,000 to help with the ongoing restoration of the exterior of the structure, including foundation and masonry repair. Ultimately, the lower-level fellowship hall will become an education and research center for the public. The upper-level church sanctuary is still used to this day for worship by the congregation.



Bethel Community Empowerment and Wellness Center (Baltimore)

Bethel Outreach Center, Inc.

The Bethel Community Empowerment and Wellness Center is a 1920 contributing structure in the Old West Baltimore National Register Historic District. The building once served as a community center for this once-thriving African American neighborhood, but currently stands vacant. Bethel Outreach Center, Inc., a subsidiary of Bethel A.M.E. Church, is the project sponsor, and will use the \$100,000 grant to rehabilitate the building and open it once again as a community resource center for the local African American community. AAHPP funds will be used for HVAC and plumbing work, painting, and accessibility improvements. Once renovations are complete, Bethel A.M.E. will open the building as a resource center, protecting the

neighborhood's heritage by supporting local nonprofits and organizations in revitalizing the neighborhood. The center will also provide a café, culinary arts training, and a community nutrition program.

Charles H. Chipman Cultural Center

The Chipman Foundation, Inc.

The Charles H. Chipman Center is the oldest African American congregation site in the region and the first site for religious services in the region during and after slavery, the first school for children of freed slaves in the region, and the first Delmarva high school for African American children after the Civil War. The center was originally constructed as a church, school, and meeting hall in 1838, with significant additions and alterations in 1889, 1901, and 1910. The building has been in use as a cultural center since 1994, and houses a museum focusing on African American heritage of the Eastern Shore region.



The project sponsor, the Chipman Foundation, will use the \$100,000 grant for the next phase of the center's rehabilitation. Work will include security and fire safety upgrades, replacement of the roof, and repair of interior plaster and trim. The property will continue to be used as a cultural and educational center for the community, as well as to host cultural events. The center will also continue to function as a museum of African American heritage, which includes artifacts related to Dr. and Mrs. Charles H. Chipman, who were prominent local African American educators.



Magothy Elementary Rosenwald School

Mount Zion United Methodist Church - Magothy

The Magothy Elementary Rosenwald School was built in the 1920s, with half of the funding provided by the Mt. Zion United Methodist Church. The proximity of the church and school represent the close traditional relationship between African American churches and African American education, particularly during the era of segregation when African Americans were denied equal access to public education. The church

building and associated school played an important role in the social and cultural development of the area's African-American community, with the school serving children until 1959.

The project sponsor, Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, plans to use the \$100,000 grant to rehabilitate the building as a community service building. The first phase of construction will include work to secure the building envelope, including replacement of the roof and siding, as well as interior repairs. The building has housed traveling exhibits related to its history as a school and its role within the local African American community, and the sponsor plans to make the renovated building available for community events.

Stanley Institute (Cambridge)

The Friends of Stanley Institute, Inc.

The Stanley Institute School, also known as Rock School, is a one-story, gable-front building constructed c. 1865 and moved to its current site in 1867. The building functioned as both a school and church until 1875, when the Christ Rock Church was built across the street. The school is believed to be one of the oldest still-extant one-room schools for African American education in Dorchester County. The school is one of Maryland's oldest organized and maintained by a black community, and is significant for its role in the development of African American social history in Maryland.



Project sponsor Friends of Stanley Institute will use the \$24,000 grant to prevent water intrusion into the building, repair the ADA ramp and historic windows, and paint. The Friends of Stanley Institute will continue to use the school as a museum to raise public awareness and understanding of the African-American experience in Dorchester County through programming that will incorporate Christ Rock United Methodist Church and its adjacent cemetery, which are located in close proximity to the school.



Ebenezer A.M.E. Church and Parish House (Baltimore)

Built in 1865 for a congregation organized in 1836, Ebenezer A.M.E. Church is thought to be the oldest standing church in Baltimore that was erected by African Americans and continuously occupied by the descendants of the same congregation. The property was originally a paint shop and was purchased by four freed slaves in 1839 before construction of the existing church and parish house were undertaken. This brick Gothic Revival church has a prominent bell tower, and the parish house is located in an adjoining rowhouse.

Project sponsor Ebenezer Kingdom Builders received previous AAHPP funding to install historically appropriate windows on the church, and will use this \$100,000 grant to the second phase of their four-phase rehabilitation project. This phase will focus on replacing the roof of the church, bell tower, and parish house. The church will continue to serve as a place of worship and as the location of numerous community services.

Mt. Gilboa AME Church (Catonsville)

Mt. Gilboa African Methodist Episcopal Church

Mt. Gilboa AME Church, formerly Mt. Gilboa Chapel, was built in 1859 by the free black community of Oella and is one of the oldest African American churches in Baltimore County. The chapel is significant as an achievement on the part of free black people who built a substantial stone church of approximately the same size and quality as the places of worship used by other small white congregations. Through the early 1900s, the upper floor of the building served as the worship space while the lower level was a one-room school and social center. The present church replaces an earlier log chapel, where Benjamin Banneker, whose farm was nearby, may have worshipped. Banneker is buried nearby, and a modern monument to him is located on the site.



Mt. Gilboa AME Church will use this \$72,000 grant for an exterior rehabilitation project to repair the foundation and masonry walls, paint, and replace the roof. In addition to functioning as a place of worship, the church will continue to promote education about local African American history in general, and about the life and contributions of Benjamin Banneker in particular. The church is engaged in active partnerships with other local congregations and businesses in serving the local community and promoting awareness of African American history.



St. Paul Church (Denton)

St. Paul Church Historical, Revitalization, and Maintenance, Inc.

The St. Paul Church is one of the earliest African American churches in Caroline County. The associated cemetery has burials dating back to at least the 1840s, as well as burials of veterans of World War I and World War II. The project's sponsor – St. Paul Church Historical, Revitalization, and Maintenance, Inc. – intends to rehabilitate the church as a potential stop along the Underground Railroad Scenic Byway, where members of the public can learn about African American culture in the 19th and 20th centuries. The church will also provide a rest stop for those

visiting the cemetery. The \$8,000 grant will assist with the planned rehabilitation, which will include re-roofing, window repair, and foundation repair so that the church building can be reopened to the public.